

The Challenge and Opportunity of Unstructured Data for Geographers: Genesis for Careers and Research

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The use of Social Index Matrixes to help predict market value of products such as green energy adoption and understanding the impact of regional adaptations of technology that may reduce the carbon footprint of the trucking industry are two examples of reserch areas where “unstructured data” holds the key to uncovering underlying driving forces that may lead to improvements in specific conditions. In the era of Big Data unstructured data is a large challenge for both industry and government. For industry it is a financial question of capturing market shares, reducing delays, or improving product use. It’s a problem that in many cases needs a spatial analysis and commonly requires cultural, social, and political perspectives and understandings. As AI promises answers to many questions, practical answers to be addressed from unstructured data require intellect from human geographers and other spatial scientists. This round table discussion invites industry, government and academia to explore this burgeoning area together where geographic practitioners can seek career directions and the academy can undertake research to address questions associated with unstructured data.

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